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ABSTRACT

As part of a continuing program designed to provide Nevada's school population with information that will facilitate greater awareness and understanding of both past and present Native Nevadan lifestyles and contributions, this generalized curriculum guide might constitute a social studies unit for the upper levels of elementary and/or junior high schools. Divided into 3 basic areas of study, predicted on time periods, this guide encompasses: (1) The Economy of the Great Basin in Prehistoric Times (The Indian--His Home and Family); (2) Historic Times (Reservations, Tribes, Location, and Jurisdiction); and (3) The Historic Indian. Each narrative is followed by a word study list. Also included is a Nevada map designating county boundaries and the historical territories of the Washoe, Northern Paiute, Southern Paiute, and Shoshone Indian tribes. Among the cultural concepts addressed are nomadic tendencies, family groups, extended families, food procurement and processing, children, marriage, practical education, respect for the aged, shared parental responsibilities, and those historical developments which altered the Indian way of life. Examples of words found in the word study lists are aboriginal, primitive, nomadic, necessity, economy, survival, source, and bureau. (JC)

INDIANS OF NEVADA

by

HELEN DUNN

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FOREWORD

The Nevada State Department of Education is pleased to be able to publish this series as part of a continuing program of information on Nevada Indians.

This program is designed to provide Nevada's school population with information in order that they may have a greater awareness and understanding of the lifestyle, past and present, as well as the contributions made by the Native-Nevadans.

No attempt has been made to edit or alter the author's original manuscripts.

Chas. H. Poehlman, Consultant
(Indian Education)

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ABOUT

HELEN DUNN

A native of Leadville, Colorado, she came to Goldfield, Nevada, when a baby. There she went through the school system, and graduated from Esmeralda County High School with high honors.

She is a graduate of the University of Nevada, specializing in history and received a B.A. An M.A. degree in Journalism was received from the University of Colorado.

She taught in Goldfield High School and in Reno's Billinghurst Junior High School.

Helen Dunn has long been identified with the study of Nevada. She fostered such a study at Billinghurst where a section of the school's library is known as the Helen M. Dunn Nevada History Library.

She has written several Nevada booklets which will be published by the Nevada State Department of Education.

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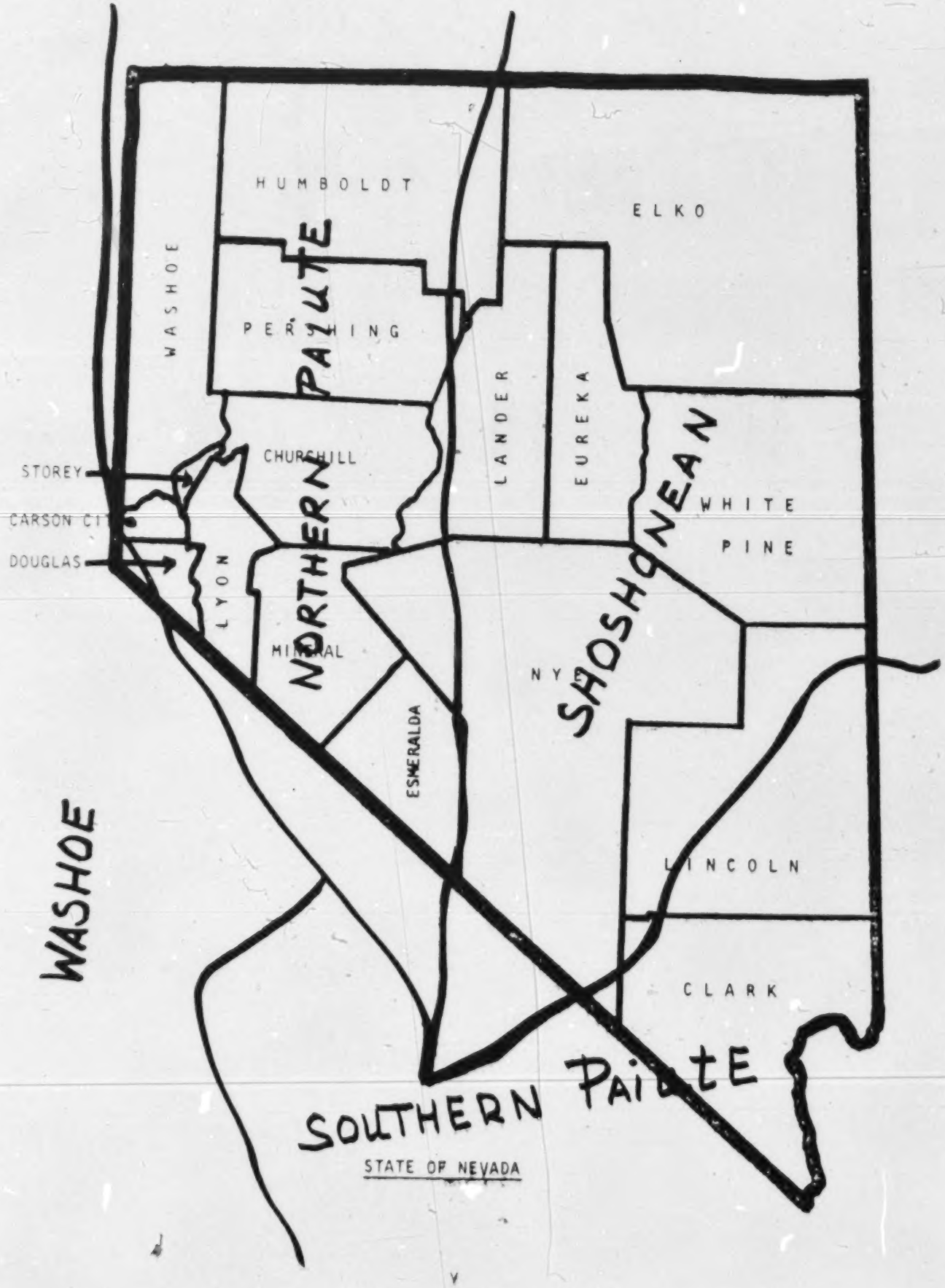
HUMBOLDT
ELKO
WASHOE
PERSHING
NORTHERN PAIUTE
LANDER
EUREKA
SHOSHONEAN
CHURCHILL
STOREY
CARSON CITY
DOUGLAS
LYON
WHITE PINE
MINERAL
NYE
ESMERALDA
WASHOE
LINCOLN
CLARK
SOUTHERN Paiute
STATE OF NEVADA

VOLUME 1.

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Word Study

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THE ECONOMY OF THE GREAT BASIN INDIANS

Pre-historic Times

From early times, the Indians of the Nevada Desert Culture, those who inhabited the Great Basin region now known as Nevada, were nomadic. The bands and tribes lived what might be called a hand-to-mouth existence. They gathered and dug from the deserts and mountains for their necessities. Thus, they felt a kinship and a sort of ownership of the territory they foraged. The mountains, valleys, lakes, rivers, and desert lands were areas of never-ending search for the necessities of life--food, clothing, and shelter.

With these goals in mind, they worked as family groups. The wisest or best member acted as a work leader until the particular task at hand was completed. New leaders were selected as each piece of work was necessary. This might be for hunting, trapping, fishing, picking, digging, stalking, or other work detail.

Blood kin and relatives often lived together as a compact unit for social and economic survival. In this way, they worked together to solve their problems of necessity and to fulfill their social and ritual obligations.

The extended family occupied a single house. These dwellings were made according to the weather and the materials at hand. In winter, these dwellings were, as a rule, conical homes made of wooden poles covered with brush and mud thatch. They were usually lined with reed mats made from weeds and marsh and grasses. In summer, the homes were more portable and of a tepee type. Made with light poles, they were covered with rabbit skin blankets and antelope hides. These were often expertly sewn, stretched, stitched and bound in an artistic and crafts-manlike manner. The Indians, also, lived in rock caves and adobe houses made of rocks and mud or of logs and mud. These types of dwellings were revisited year after year following the seasonal harvests of pinon nuts, acorns, berries, seeds, fish, rock chucks, waterfowl, deer, and other animals. Thus, there was a pattern of moving from place to place, always being near the source of supply--whether it be on the mountain slopes, on the shores of lakes, or rivers, or on the dry and forbidding desert lands.

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Perhaps the most arduous and time consuming activity of this early Indian life was the procurement and processing of food. Though the men and the women worked together at most tasks, there was some division of labor according to sex. Men hunted, and they were the craftsmen. They made the clothing, constructed the houses, made the implements for household tasks and the weapons for protection. The women, on the other hand, spent long hours digging roots and bulbs, gathering seeds, pinon nuts, acorns, berries, and insect life. All of this had to be processed and prepared for eating or for future use by drying, cooking, or baking. Some of these edibles were then cached for future needs against the extreme privations of the lean times, such as the cold winters, the long droughts, and the unproductive cycle. Also, to be noted among the duties of the women, was the making of medicines from the native plant life. Herbs, roots, leaves, and sap was used for teas, ointments, salve, powder, and poultices.

In the economic life of these early Indians of the Great Basin, sharing and exchanging goods were necessary for survival. Cooperation was a basic trait of their family life. Competition, as we know it today, had no place in their way of life.

THE INDIAN--HIS HOME AND FAMILY

Though facts about the home and family of the Indian have been given in other areas of the Desert Culture story, it is thought that these facts would prove both interesting and informative.

1. The Indian was not agricultural by nature. He had not developed a strong political system. Therefore, his villages and bands were small.

2. The Indian family was kept small in the summer so that not as much food was used.

3. The Indian family combined with other Indian families in the winter and "pooled" their food. Protection was also greater and better when the families were together.

4. The Paiute and the Washoe Indian families, traveling in bands, required each member to help gather food. Children also had to do their share.

5. The Indian who did not do his share was left behind. When he decided to do his share of food gathering, he could rejoin the band.

6. Marriage was important to the Indians. The men offered protection and the women were needed for food gathering.

7. Children were an important part of the Indian family. They not only helped in food gathering but were also the ones who would carry on the family traditions.

8. As to the children--when they misbehaved, they were never physically punished. They were shamed. If they continued to be naughty, they were told that a "whirlwind" would get them.

9. The education of the children was one of practical vein and was based on responsibility and sharing with the other members of the band.

10. Usually the grandfather taught the children and his "course of study" included traditions, family life, and the knowledge of what was right and what was wrong.

11. The happiness of the children was of prime importance to the Indian band. If the parent or parents were killed, someone in the band (usually a relative) took over their care. No child was ever without a "mother" and "father".

12. There was divorce in the Indian family. The one for whom life was unbearable left. The children remained with the parent still in the band.

13. The early Indians of Nevada were, as a rule, peaceful. But, if the peace was broken, the offenders were punished. Some of the penalties included stoning the shaman to death and killing witches. In all crimes, offenses against an individual were considered to be offenses against the band.

14. Older people who could no longer carry their share of responsibility were left behind to die. This primitive culture had no way to deal with the aged.

15. Because the life of the Desert Culture Indian was nomadic, there was no chief of the band. Instead, there was a headman called a "talker". As his name implies, he gave talks to the members of the band. These consisted of telling them about the ripening of plant foods in various locations and about the trips to the regions where shares of the food were given to each person or family.

16. Social get-togethers, larger than those held within the band, were only temporary. The most common of these was the gathering of several bands of Indians at rabbit or antelope drives. These hunts, which were held once a year, rarely lasted longer than two or three weeks.

17. Life to the Indian people was a hardship. Death was a constant threat. Thus, the family was a necessary unit for survival.

WORD STUDY

1. agrarian
2. capable
3. aboriginal
4. pool
5. resources
6. dispersed
7. nomadic
8. mutual
9. tradition
10. prime

1. inevitable
2. primitive
3. offender
4. various
5. locality
6. allocate
7. temporary
8. rarely
9. necessity
10. constant

Historic Times

Changes in the economic life of the Indians came about, naturally, by the advent of the white man. As early as 1787, the first Congress and the first President saw the need to remedy the conflict between the two racial units. The Northwest Ordinance of 1789 also stated the need of peace with these words:

> *"The utmost good faith shall always be observed toward the Indians; their land and property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and in their property, right, and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars authorized by Congress; but laws founded in justice and humanity shall from time to time be made, for preventing wrongs being done to them, and for preserving peace and friendship with them."*

Good as these intentions were, the Indians continued to be treated as an inferior race and, in many instances, their rights were violated. They were often the target of unscrupulous agents and traders. They resisted the stream of white migration and, so doing, they left their territories' where many acres remained unoccupied. The whites crossed their boundary lines and fixed themselves, without consent, in the territory of the Indians.

An unfriendly and hostile feeling naturally arose. The Indians attacked and plundered whenever the opportunity arose. The whites repelled the attacks and shot the Indians without a feeling of regret or concern. Therefore, many things were done to try to remedy the situation.

1. Congress appropriated money for an army to repel the foe.

2. In 1790, money was given to regulate trade with Indian tribes, to provide for the licensing of Indian traders, and giving regulatory powers to the President in Indian affairs.

3. In 1806, the Office of Superintendent of Indians Trade was established. By this Act, trading houses were maintained under government ownership. Its purpose was to supply Indians with necessary goods at a fair price. Also, it saw that a fair price was given to the Indians for furs and goods in exchange.

4. This office was abolished in 1822, and replaced by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Its chief purpose was the introduction among Indians of the habits and arts of civilization.

5. In 1834, Congress established a Department of Indian Affairs. This was, in a sense, the reorganization of the War Department in relation to Indian affairs. It provided for the employment of agents, sub-agents, interpreters, and other employees.

6. In 1849, Congress created the Home Department of the Interior. By this Act, the Bureau of Indian Affairs passed from military to civil control.

Prior to the gold rush to California in 1848 and 1849, the stream of white migration had been content to push the Indians before it. By 1850, it began to bypass him, surrounding and engulfing him. It was during this 1850 period that the Indians of the Great Basin came into contact with the whites. These tribes included the Washo, the Northern Paiute, the Shoshoni, and the Southern Paiute.

During the 1863-1876 period, the Indians were being placed on the western reservations.

Thus, one can see how the economy of the Indian's life changed. From the days when one "C" (Cooperation) described it, it became a life economy described by three other "C"'s--Competition, Conflict and Confusion.

RESERVATION	TRIBE	LOCATION	JURISDICTION
Battle Mountain Colony	Shoshone	Battle Mountain, Nev.	State
Duck Valley Reservation	Shoshone-Paiute	Owyhee, Nevada	Federal
Duckwater Reservation	Shoshone	Currant, Nevada	State
Ely Indian Colony	Shoshone	Ely, Nevada	State
Fallon Res. * Colony	Paiute-Shoshone	Fallon, Nevada	Federal
Fort McDermitt Res.	Paiute-Shoshone	McDermitt, Nevada	Nevada
Goshute Reservation	Goshute	Wendover, Utah	State
Las Vegas Colony	Paiute	Las Vegas, Nevada	Federal
Lovelock Colony	Paiute	Lovelock, Nevada	State
Moapa Reservation	Paiute	Las Vegas, Nevada	Federal
Pyramid Lake Res.	Paiute	Pyramid Lake, Nevada	Federal
Reno-Sparks Colony	Paiute-Washoe	Reno, Nevada	State
Elko Colony	Shoshone	Elko, Nevada	State
Walker River Res.	Paiute	Schurz, Nevada	Federal
Carson Colony	Washoe	Carson City, Nevada	State
Dresslerville Colony	Washoe	Dresslerville, Nevada	State
Yerington Res. & Colony	Paiute	Yerington, Nevada	Federal
Woodsford Community	Washoe	Alpine County, Calif.	State
Winnemucca Colony	Paiute	Winnemucca, Nevada	State
Yomba Reservation	Shoshone	Austin, Nevada	State

WORD STUDY

1. economy
2. nomadic
3. existence
4. necessities
5. kinship
6. foraged
7. goals
8. stalking
9. kin
10. compact

1. survival
2. fulfill
3. ritual
4. obligations
5. conical
6. thatch
7. portable
8. tepee
9. adobe
10. seasonal

1. source
2. arduous
3. consuming
4. procurement
5. craftsmen
6. implements
7. weapons
8. cached
9. lean
10. droughts

1. cooperation
2. trait
3. competition
4. advent
5. racial
6. consent
7. invaded
8. justice
9. humanity
10. preserve

1. peace
2. intentions
3. inferior
4. violate
5. resisted
6. boundary
7. consent
8. territory
9. hostile
10. plunder

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Word Study - continued

1. attack
2. repelled
3. regret
4. remedy
5. situation
6. regulate
7. license
8. provide
9. regulate
10. affairs

1. office
2. maintain
3. government
4. purpose
5. necessary
6. exchange
7. abolish
8. bureau
9. civilization
10. agent

1. employment
2. military
3. civil
4. prior
5. content
6. surround
7. engulf
8. competition
9. conflict
10. confusion

THE HISTORIC INDIAN FAMILY

With the coming of the white man into Nevada, the Indian was exposed to a new way of life. The change was not easy. We can see that it was very difficult to break down thousands of years of tradition and culture. We can see that it was very difficult for the Indians to readily assume and accept the ways of the white man. Though much of the early culture has been lost, some traditions and cultures still exist with the Paiutes, Shoshoni, and Washo. Let's summarize some facts which came into being with the advent of the white man and his ways of life.

1. The introduction of the horse had a great affect upon the Indians of the Great Basin area. With the use of this animal, hunting and food gathering were made easier. This was especially true in the case of the Paiutes and Shoshoni. These two tribes had more territory and larger distances to cover; therefore, the horse was a great asset to them. The Washo occupied a lesser area and therefore, were not as dependent on the horse. They did use the animal, however.

2. With the coming of the white man (whose eventual goal was to reach the ocean), food was a great factor. With its becoming scarce with the infringing upon Indian land, less food was available. There was only one eventual course for the Indian to take--rebellion!

3. As we have said before, the Indians of the Nevada region were, by nature, peaceful people. With the coming of the white man to their land and the struggle for food, there was a problem of warfare. They had no real knowledge for this.

4. All was not peaceful among the Indians themselves. The Paiutes and the Shoshoni were natural enemies. Because the white man first made contact with the Washo, this tribe regarded the white man almost a savior rather than an enemy. They, therefore, helped in the conquering of the Paiutes and Shoshoni. Though they had been helped by the Washo, the white man admired the Paiutes and Shoshoni because they had put up resistance.

5. A steady stream of white men came into Nevada and infringed upon the Indian land. As a result, much of the culture carried on for years.

6. When it was realized that the white man had won, many bands and families became dependent on the white man for work. Much of this was on the ranches. There they did not have to look for or raise their food.

7. As time went on, many Indians were moved to reservations. Here they received some education, including ranching and agriculture.

8. The reservation life worked with some Indians and with others it did not. In some instances, the Indians moved from the reservations, took up residence in towns or on the edge of towns. As a result, Indian colonies near some Nevada towns came into being.

9. Down through the years some of the older Indians practice customs of the older culture. Today, however, most Indians have adopted the ways of the white man. These include courtship and marriage, childbirth, and the like.

10. An interesting fact of the Washo tribe. At one time the child was not given a name until he was old enough to talk. Today, he is named at birth, having both an Indian and a white man's name.

11. Indian children are not usually struck when they misbehave. The parents instill a sense of shame in them. Like the white children, they can be disciplined at school.

12. In early times the grandfather educated the Indian child. Today he receives his education at school. However, before going to school, he learns his family culture at home.

13. Divorce was allowed among the Indians. In early times, the husband or wife simply left the group. The children remained with the parent staying. Today, however, Indian divorce cases goes through the court.

14. Death is something always present with the Indian way of life. In early times there were many practices and customs. They were buried in rock crannies; they were cremated. They were long periods of wailing. The homes, property and the animals of the dead were burned.

    Some of these customs are still present, such as wailing at the funeral. The dead are buried and their property is not destroyed.

15. Though it is thought that some day the Indian culture of the Nevada tribes will disappear, it is felt that this will take time. They have thousands of years of culture behind them, and this is not changed or dropped "overnight".

16. The Indian of today, especially the children, is a product of his culture and displays some traits of his tribe's early culture. He is also a by-product of our Western culture. At home, he is exposed to one culture; in school, he is exposed to another culture. A certain amount of turmoil, thus, is aroused. He is caught in the conflict of two worlds. This calls for understanding and tolerance.

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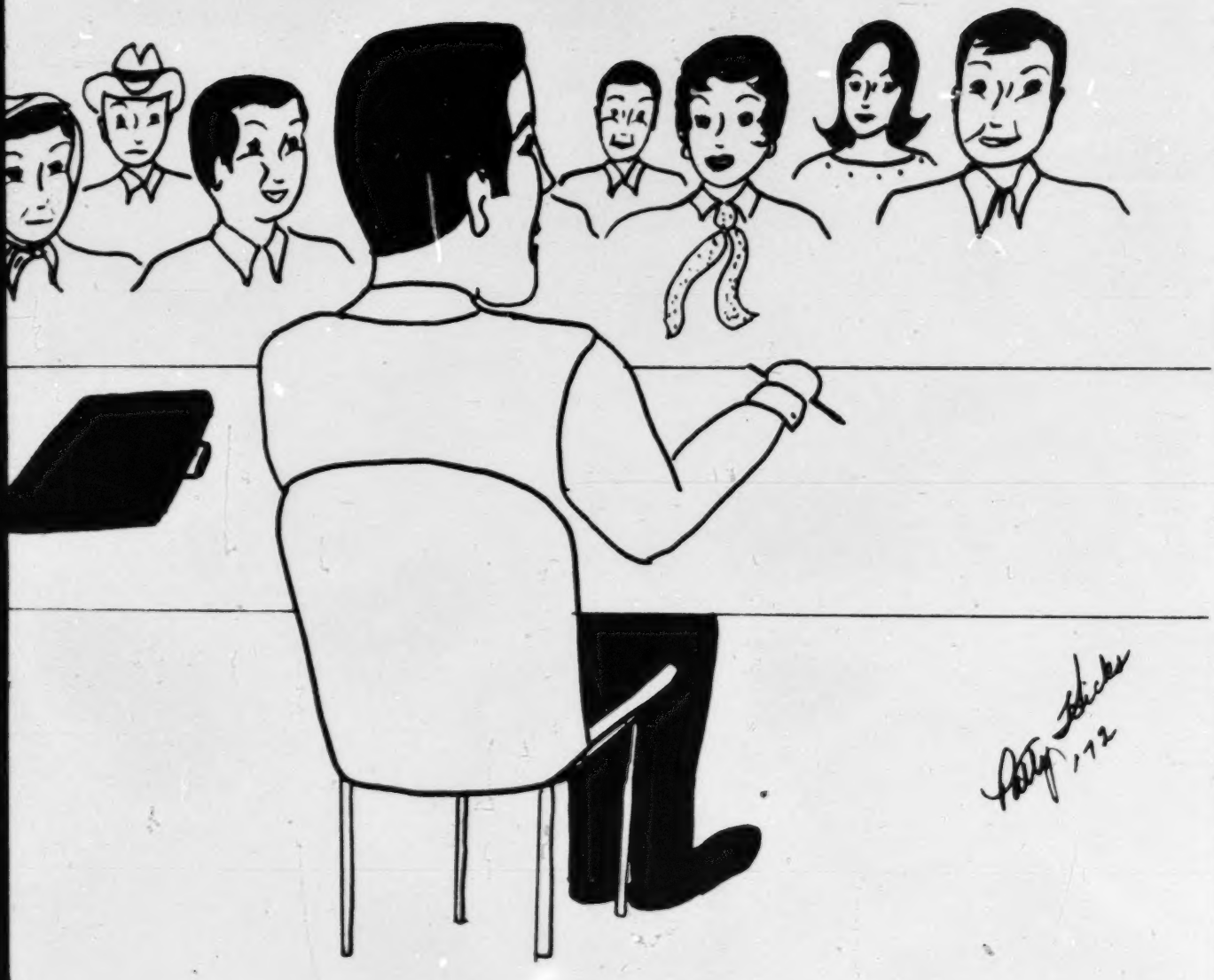

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WORD STUDY

1. historic
2. exposed
3. tradition
4. culture
5. difficult
6. assume
7. summarize
8. advent
9. asset
10. eventual

1. dependent
2. factor
3. infringing
4. available
5. rebellion
6. struggle
7. knowledge
8. contact
9. savior
10. conquer

1. admire
2. resistance
3. steady
4. realize
5. reservations
6. residence
7. colonies
8. practice
9. adopted
10. discipline

1. divorce
2. court
3. practices
4. crannies
5. wailing
6. traits
7. turmoil
8. conflict
9. tolerance
10. understanding